

REMARKS

Claims 1-16, 19-31, 34-42, and 45-50 are currently pending in the subject application and are presently under consideration. Applicant's representative notes with appreciation the indication that claims 18-19, 33-34, and 44-45 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. To this end, independent claims 1, 8, 23, 35, and 46 have been amended to incorporate features deemed allowable by the Examiner, and claims 18, 33, and 44 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Additionally, claims 9, 19, 34, and 45 have been amended to cure minor informalities. A version of all pending claims is presented at pages 2-9 of this Reply. Favorable reconsideration of the subject patent application is respectfully requested in view of the comments and amendments herein.

I. Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 8-14, 20, 23-29, 35-40, and 46-48 Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Claims 1, 2, 8-14, 20, 23-29, 35-40, and 46-48 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Kaler *et al.* (US 7,051,330). Withdrawal of this rejection is requested for at least the following reasons. Independent claims 1, 8, 23, 35, and 46 have been amended to incorporate aspects deemed allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, this rejection is now moot and should be withdrawn.

II. Rejection of Claims 3, 15, 21, 30, 41, and 49 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 3, 15, 21, 30, 41, and 49 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaler *et al.* in view of Okano *et al.* (US 6,725,253). This rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons. Claims 3, 15, 21, 30, 41, and 49 depend from independent claims 1, 8, 23, 41, and 46 that have been amended to incorporate subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

III. Rejection of Claims 4, 5, 22, and 50 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 4, 5, 22, and 50 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaler *et al.* in view of Paxhia *et al.* (US 6,493,749). This rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons. Claims 4, 5, 22, 50 depend from independent claims 1, 8, and 46 that have been amended to incorporate features deemed allowable the Examiner. Accordingly, this rejection is now moot and should be withdrawn.

IV. Rejection of Claims 6 and 7 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaler *et al.* in view of Paxhia *et al.* as applied to claims 4 and 5 above, and further in view of Okano *et al.* This rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons. Claims 6 and 7 depend from independent claim 1 that has been amended to incorporate aspects deemed allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

V. Rejection of Claims 16, 31 and 42 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 16, 31 and 42 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaler *et al.* in view of Okano *et al.* as applied to claim 15 above, and further in view of Paxhia *et al.* Withdrawal of this rejection is requested for at least the following reasons. Claims 16, 31, and 42 depend from independent claims 8, 23, and 35 respectively, and the subject independent claims have been amended to include subject matter that the Examiner has indicated as being allowable. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

The present application is believed to be in condition for allowance in view of the above comments and amendments. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

In the event any fees are due in connection with this document, the Commissioner is authorized to charge those fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1063 [MSFTP170US].

Should the Examiner believe a telephone interview would be helpful to expedite favorable prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,
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